

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE**

**October 2, 2006  
1:30 p.m., MST**

The Arizona English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force met in Room 417 of the Arizona Department of Education, 1535 W. Jefferson Street, Phoenix, Arizona. The Task Force meeting was convened by Task Force Chairman Mr. Alan Maguire at 1:43 p.m. MST.

## **1. Call to order**

Present:

Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman  
Mr. Jim DiCello (via teleconference)  
Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan  
Ms. Johanna Haver  
Ms. Karen Merritt  
Ms. Anna Rosas  
Dr. John Baracy

Absent:

Mr. Tom Tyree  
Dr. Eugene Garcia

A quorum was present for the purpose of conducting business.

## **2. Approval of September 21, 2006 and September 22, 2006 minutes**

Mr. Alan Maguire held the approval of the Task Force minutes from September 21<sup>st</sup> and from September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## **3. Continue discussion of Structured English Immersion (SEI) program models**

Ms. Glorine Mira-Johnson, Tempe High School ELL Department Chair, and Ms. Beth Alsen, Tempe High School ELL Coordinator, presented the Structured English Immersion (SEI) program used at Tempe High School, in the Tempe Union High School District. The district has six high schools within the municipalities of Tempe, Chandler, Phoenix, and Guadalupe. Tempe High School has approximately 1350 students; 186 are classified as English Language Learners (52% of the district's total ELL population). Ms. Mira-Johnson and Ms. Alsen stated that Tempe

High has a large number of pre-emergent, monolingual Spanish students and a number of refugees.

During the first year of SEI instruction, ELL students are placed in either Basic I and Basic II depending on their level of English proficiency, and they receive two hours of English Language Development (ELD) per day. One hour focuses on Language Development and the second hour focus on Reading Development. In prior years, ELLs received three hours of English Language Development, but loss of funding eliminated the additional hour of instruction. Ms. Mira-Johnson and Ms. Alsen stated that the 3-hour program had been very successful. It focused on curriculum and provided significant remediation support.

In the current SEI Basic I two-hour block, students receive instruction in phonics, grammar, foundations, vocabulary development, comprehension, reading, and writing. Language acquisition and grammar are spiraled with academic standards and vocabulary. Students placed in Basic II also receive two hours of English language development. In addition to the two-hour language block, English language learners are placed in mainstream classrooms to receive instruction in prescribed content areas. One paraprofessional assists teachers, works in ELL classrooms, and handles ELL student records.

Ms. Karen Merritt asked what strategies Tempe High School could use to include four hours of SEI instruction. Ms. Alsen said that it would be best to have content area teachers (such as math or science teachers) with full ESL endorsements provide additional language support through academic vocabulary development, reading, and writing. Ms. Anna Rosas asked if the school made their Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO). Ms. Mira-Johnson said that the district had that information, but that she believed Tempe High School had met its objectives.

#### **4. Presentations and discussion of components, definitions and terms of SEI program models**

***The history of Arizona's English Language Proficiency standards, the selection of a single State of Arizona ELL assessment, and the development of Arizona's English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA).***

Ms. Irene Moreno, Deputy Associate Superintendent for the Office of English Language Acquisition Services stated that in 2003, in order to comply with federal requirements, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) began the process to develop a single English proficiency assessment that aligned with Arizona proficiency standards. The English Acquisition Services Unit of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) contracted with educational standards expert, Susan Pimentel, Co-Founder of StandardsWork, to develop draft ELL standards.

During the process, regional focus groups were conducted which included ELL coordinators, ELL teachers, principals, directors of federal programs, a superintendent, assistant superintendents, Indian Education coordinators, ELL testers, and members of the Bilingual

Consortium. The final English Language Learner Proficiency Standards were adopted by the Arizona State Board of Education on January 26, 2004.

Before the ELL Proficiency Standards were developed, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) used multiple performance indicators from their assessment instruments to measure student progress in English. A common set of standards, benchmarks, and performance indicators did not exist. Data from LEAs was disparate, based on multiple and inconsistent student performance indicators. Data analysis was difficult. NCLB requires an annual assessment of English proficiency of all students with limited English proficiency in the schools served by the State educational agency.

Working through the ADE Procurement Office, Harcourt's Stanford English Language Proficiency (SELP) Test was selected as Arizona's ELL assessment instrument. Harcourt's SELP test had the highest alignment (approximately 69%) to the Arizona ELL proficiency standards of the five proposals submitted during the Request For Proposal process.

In August 2004 ADE English Acquisition Services was informed by the U.S Department of Education that a higher correlation between the proficiency standards and the assessment was required. An augmentation approach rather than a customized test was selected. The name AZELLA (Arizona English Language Learner Assessment) was selected as the name of Arizona's new augmented SELP test. AZELLA retains a minimum of 30% of the SELP items in each subtest (i.e., Listening, Writing Conventions, Reading, Speaking) within each assessment grade band in order to retain the SELP vertical psychometric scale.

As required by the U.S. Department of Education, a study of AZELLA alignment to Arizona's English Language Learner Proficiency Standards was conducted. The results of the alignment study were an overall alignment of 85%. This percentage is the overall alignment in the Listening, Writing Conventions, Reading, Writing, and Speaking subtests for all five grade testing bands (Preliteracy, Primary, Elementary, Middle Grades, and High School.) In July 2006, AZELLA was approved by the Arizona State Board of Education.

ADE conducted extensive training on use of the AZELLA throughout Arizona.

Chairman Maguire asked if the AZELLA could be used to both provide data on a group of students and on individual students. Ms. Moreno said that the assessment was designed for both purposes. She said the AZELLA was constructed to retain vertical psychometric alignment with the SELP test so that longitudinal data would be able to be collected on ELLs. She clarified that determining a student is proficient in English does not ensure that he is also proficient academically. Ms. Garcia Dugan said that there can be other reasons that an ELL student may not perform well academically, for example if they do not attend school regularly.

## **5. Call to the Public**

Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman, called for Public comments. There were no public statements.

## **6. Adjourn**

Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman, stated that the next meeting would be October 11 at 1:30 p.m. at a location to be announced.

Mr. Maguire adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm.

## **Arizona ELL Task Force**

Alan Maguire, Chairman  
December 18, 2006